

United Action Connecticut meets to prepare 2012 program



Lorella Praeli, of Connecticut Students for Dream speaks to the UACT audience about the need to help children of illegal immigrants.

Photo by Dortha Cool Willetts

By Dortha Cool Willetts
Chronicle Staff Writer

"Squeezed by rising living costs, a record number of Americans — nearly 1 in 2 — have fallen into poverty or are scraping by on earnings that classify them as low income."

This statement comes from a December report using the latest census data, which "depict a middle class that's shrinking as unemployment stays high and the government's safety net frays."

"One in 45 children in the USA — 1.6 million children — are living on the street, in homeless shelters or motels, or doubled up with other families last year," according to a 2011 report released by the National Center

on Family Homelessness. "The numbers represent a 33 percent increase from 2007, when there were 1.2 million homeless children."

One state group that has been actively working to provide solutions for these problems is United Action Connecticut, (UACT) an interfaith, multi-racial, multi-lingual organization of congregations and community institutions crossing political, economic and urban/suburban lines (www.uact4justice.org) that sponsored a gathering at St. Pius X Parish Hall on 310 Westfield in Middletown, on Tuesday, Nov. 29, to discuss ways for working cooperatively and more effectively on ways to deal with social justice issues and to shape an action plan for the organization for 2012.

At least 25 faith congregations across Connecticut from three major faiths sent teams to attend, along with allied groups such as the NAACP, Connecticut Students for a Dream, The American Federation of Teachers, Connecticut (AFT) and the Greater Hartford Interfaith Coalition for Equity and Justice (ICEJ). Michael Verrett, President of UACT, said that two congregations had just joined and he hoped others would join soon.

Verrett welcomed the gathering with these comments: "About 25 percent of the children in U.S. are living at or below the poverty line. It is issues like this that bring us together to see what we, as people of faith can do.

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